System, to provide a better deal to farmers for correcting the terms of trade, etc.

(c) and (d) The objectives of the Minimum support price is to serve as a guarantee to the producer that in the event of a glut in the market consequent on excessive production or any other reason the prices will not be allowed to fall below the minimum economic levels. Since 1991-92 season, the Government has been fixing only minimum support prices for major agricultural commodities. The Government has been organising through various governmental, state designated and cooperative agencies the purchases of major agricultural commodities for which minimum support prices arc fixed. The objective of the agricultural price policy also aims at safeguarding the interests of consumers by making available supplies at reasonable prices by way of fixing the Central Issue Price (CIP) for Public Distribution System (PDS).

Deaths Caused by Air Pollution

251. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister for ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that nearly 40,000 people die in India every year due to air pollution and Delhi alone accounts for 7500 deaths out of these;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard; and

(c) the steps Government have taken" propose to take to check pollution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) The World Bank has prepared a report entitled "The cost of inaction: Valuing the economy-wide cost of Environmental Degradation in India" which reviews the costs and the damages anticipated due to environmental degradation. The report shows the reductions in morbidity and mortality estimated to occur in 36 cities in India if pollutant levels in these cities were reduced to the World Health Organisation (WHO) annual average standard. The total is over 40,000 premature deaths avoided, with 7,500 in Delhi, 5,700 in Calcutta and 4,500 in Bombay.

(b) and (c) the Government has taken a number of steps towards controlling air pollution, which include:—

(i) Enforcement of vehicular emission standards for new vehicles at the manufacturing stage;

(ii) Enforcement of pollution control standards for in-use vehicles by imposing punitive penalties;

(iii) Provision of unleaded petrol to reduce the concentration of lead in the ambient air throughout the country in a phased manner;

(iv) Introduction of cleaner fuels which would result in low generation of air pollutants;

(v) In order to control air pollution from industries, the emission standards have been laid down which are being implemented through the State Pollution Control Boards;

(vi) Attempts are underway to shift/ relocate polluting industries located in non-conforming areas; and

(vii) zoning Atlas for siting of industries is being prepared.

Private investments in Railways

252. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether railways have decided to invite private investments only for captial intensive projects ami not for services;

(b) if so, the reasons for changing the earlier decision to privatise services, such as catering and maintenance of railway stations;

(c) whether reversal of the decision

will create serious problems for railways; and

(d) if not, the estimated catering burden railways will bear as addition to operating cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) On review, no fresh contracts for beautification/maintenance of railway stations in lieu of sole advertising rights, cleanliness of stations and its premieses and supply of bed rolls by the private parties arc being awarded and the existing contracts are also not renewed.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Inquiry into Funds Disbursement for Latur Victims

253. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: SHRI SHUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report in the "Statesman" of September 29, 1996, captioned "Money for Latur Victims siphoned off;

(b) if so, whether Government have set-up an inquiry into the circumstances how the funds have been siphoned off and to what destination, while leaving the victims of Latur quake high and dry;

(c) if so, with what results; and

(d) the steps since taken to ensure proper rehabilitation of the victims?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The report which appeared in the "Statesman" of September 30, 1996, (News dated 29th September, 1996) is not factually correct. The State Government has, therefore, not considered it necessary to set up an inquiry into the matter.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The Maharashtra Emergency Earthquake Rehabilitation Programme (MEERP) is being implemented in a phased manner, with well established procedures for reporting, monitoring and accounting. The programme is reviewed at the highest levels in the State Government periodically. The World Bank Teams also regularly assess the progress of the Programme and utilisation of its credit.

Opening of Central University in Delhi

254. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have agreed to open another Central University in the Capital as the present University of Delhi is unable to meet the demand of admissions of students;

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating whether clearance and required financial assistance have been given by UGC; and

(c) whether Government have received similar demands for setting-up of Central Universities from other States, if so, whether any decision has been taken in this regard so far and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No such proposal has been received from any State Government. Moreover, in view of the directives of the National Policy on Education-1986, as amended in 1992, the Central Government does not encourage setting